

An Roinn Oideachais agus Scileanna
Department of Education and Skills

Curriculum Evaluation
Social, Personal and Health Education

REPORT

Ainm na scoile / School name	Watergrasshill N S
Seoladh na scoile / School address	Watergrasshill Co Cork
Uimhir rolla / Roll number	16271U

Date of inspection: 09-10-2018



**An Roinn Oideachais
agus Scileanna**
Department of
Education and Skills

WHAT IS A CURRICULUM EVALUATION?

Curriculum Evaluations report on the quality of teaching and learning in specific subjects of the *Primary School Curriculum* (1999). They affirm good practice and make recommendations, where appropriate, to aid the further development of the subject in the school.

HOW TO READ THIS REPORT

During this inspection, the inspectors evaluated learning and teaching in Social, Personal and Health Education (SPHE) under the following headings:

1. Quality of pupils' learning
2. Supporting pupils' learning through learner experiences and teachers' practice
3. The effectiveness of school planning, including SSE, in progressing pupils' learning

Inspectors describe the quality of each of these areas using the Inspectorate's quality continuum which is shown on the final page of this report. The quality continuum provides examples of the language used by inspectors when evaluating and describing the quality of the school's provision in each area.

The board of management of the school was given an opportunity to comment in writing on the findings and recommendations of the report, and the response of the board will be found in the appendix of this report.

CHILD PROTECTION

During the inspection visit, the following checks in relation to the school's child protection procedures were conducted:

1. The name of the DLP and the Child Safeguarding Statement are prominently displayed near the main entrance to the school.
2. The Child Safeguarding Statement has been ratified by the board and includes an annual review and a risk assessment.
3. All teachers visited reported that they have read the Child Safeguarding Statement and that they are aware of their responsibilities as mandated persons.

The school met the requirements in relation to each of the checks above.

Curriculum Evaluation

Date of inspection	09-10-2018
Inspection activities undertaken <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Discussion with principal and teachers• Review of relevant documents• Pupil focus-group interview• Meeting with co-ordinating teachers	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Observation of teaching and learning• Examination of pupils' work• Interaction with pupils• Feedback to principal and teachers

SCHOOL CONTEXT

Watergrasshill is a co-educational primary school. It operates under the patronage of the Catholic Bishop of Cork and Ross. The staff comprises an administrative principal, fourteen mainstream class teachers and one teacher who is assigned to the special class. The school also has six special education teacher (SET) posts and one shared SET position. There are 369 pupils enrolled in the school and pupil attendance levels are high.

SUMMARY OF MAIN FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS:

FINDINGS

- A positive, supportive atmosphere, focussed on pupil wellbeing and whole-school pastoral care, is embedded in the school's culture and underpins all aspects of school life.
- There are significant strengths in the provision made for Social, Personal and Health Education (SPHE); exemplary aspects of practice, in particular in relation to anti-bullying and friendship, were noted during the evaluation.
- The quality of pupils' learning in SPHE is very good; pupils present as reflective learners with well-developed social and co-operative skills.
- High quality learning experiences are provided for pupils; they engage in a broad range of initiatives, strategies and programmes; there is scope to increase provision in the area of media education.
- Teaching is of a high quality overall; while examples of very good assessment practice were noted, there is scope to develop approaches in some settings.
- The quality of school planning is very good; the whole-school plan for SPHE is implemented consistently.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- The school should place increased emphasis on aspects of media education, including those relating to social media.
- Teachers should extend the current use of assessment strategies to include more regular assessment of pupils' short-term learning outcomes in SPHE.

DETAILED FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

1. THE QUALITY OF PUPILS' LEARNING

The overall quality of pupils' learning in SPHE is very good. They display high levels of interest and participate productively in lessons. Many pupils demonstrate very good capacity to reflect on their learning. Overall attainment is at a high standard.

Pupils' awareness of health and nutrition is developed systematically through participation in healthy eating, fundamental movement and the Active Schools programmes. Pupils demonstrate very favourable attitudes to their learning. They present with well-developed expressive and receptive language skills and respond appropriately to higher order questioning in lessons.

The pupils who participated in the focus group spoke about the range of topics covered in SPHE. They described their learning on personal safety and recounted information gleaned from external speakers on building site, road and internet safety. They described routines practiced in frequent fire drills and shared the key messages learned through participation in the Stay Safe programme. They also discussed the ways in which they learn about SPHE through group-work to explore topics on friendship, yoga and relaxation activities in the school hall and through use of the Visual Arts to express their thoughts and feelings. These pupils demonstrated an awareness of the work of their peers on school committees for the Green Schools and Health Promoting initiatives.

2. SUPPORTING PUPILS' LEARNING: LEARNER EXPERIENCES AND TEACHERS' PRACTICE

The quality of learning experiences provided for pupils in SPHE is very good. A positive, supportive atmosphere, focussed on individual wellbeing and whole-school pastoral care, is embedded in the school's culture and underpins all aspects of school life.

A very broad range of beneficial initiatives and intervention programmes is implemented and these make a meaningful impact on the pupils' social and emotional development. Programmes such as Stay Safe and Relationships and Sexuality Education (RSE) are carefully implemented and progression through these programmes is monitored in teachers' monthly progress reports. The plan for RSE provides very useful guidance for both teachers and parents on the language to be explicitly taught and identifies teacher resources to support effective delivery of the programme.

The school operates excellent practice in relation to anti-bullying. Management and teachers are acutely aware of the negative impact that bullying can have on the lives of pupils. They are committed to following principles of best practice in preventing and addressing bullying behaviour. A broad range of education and prevention strategies is implemented consistently to build empathy, respect and resilience in pupils. Anti-bullying programmes are introduced in an age-appropriate manner for infant pupils and the school follows a monthly intervention programme for all pupils from third to sixth class. A positive approach to managing pupil behaviour is implemented consistently and teachers' participation in continuous professional development on restorative practices impacts very positively in this regard.

The school places significant importance on the quality of relationships within the school. Teachers actively seek to model a positive commitment to personal wellbeing and place

considerable emphasis on demonstrating respectful relationships and on the promotion of a healthy lifestyle.

Teaching is of a high quality overall, with very effective teaching evident in a number of settings. Lessons are well structured and subject specific methodologies are implemented consistently. Learning intentions are shared with the pupils and a range of assessment approaches is used to check for understanding and to monitor aspects of attainment. Teachers should extend the current use of assessment strategies to include a more regular assessment of pupils' short-term learning outcomes in SPHE. High quality support is provided for pupils with special educational needs. All teachers prepare comprehensive long and short-term plans to support teaching and learning in SPHE.

A broad range of resources is used to enhance the pupils' learning. In classrooms, pupils work in SPHE is presented in stimulating wall displays, along with topic-specific language, class contracts, class rules and guides on respectful listening. Very good use is made of photographs both in classrooms and on corridors to enhance the pupils' sense of belonging. The recent acquisition of information and communications technology (ICT) hardware will enhance the potential to use technologies to further enrich provision for SPHE.

3. THE EFFECTIVENESS OF SCHOOL PLANNING, INCLUDING SSE, IN PROGRESSING PUPILS' LEARNING

The quality of planning, including school self-evaluation (SSE), and the contribution of planning processes to progressing pupils' overall learning are very good. The current focus of SSE is directed towards literacy, numeracy and musical literacy and targets have been set to further improve the quality of pupils' learning outcomes in identified areas.

The school has engaged very successfully and in a highly commendable manner, in the careful formulation and frequent review of school planning for SPHE. The work of the teacher-leader for SPHE is commended highly. She is instrumental in the introduction and the monitoring of the effectiveness of new programmes and initiatives. Planning is managed in a collaborative manner. Very good use is made of staff meetings to discuss aspects of overall curricular provision requiring improvement and to determine specific focus for class groups on an annual basis. Class teachers demonstrate very good capacity to collaborate in their planning and this leads to a consistent, developmental implementation of the curriculum for SPHE.

THE INSPECTORATE'S QUALITY CONTINUUM

Inspectors describe the quality of provision in the school using the Inspectorate's quality continuum which is shown below. The quality continuum provides examples of the language used by inspectors when evaluating and describing the quality of the school's provision of each area.

Level	Description	Example of descriptive terms
Very Good	Very good applies where the quality of the areas evaluated is of a very high standard. The very few areas for improvement that exist do not significantly impact on the overall quality of provision. For some schools in this category the quality of what is evaluated is outstanding and provides an example for other schools of exceptionally high standards of provision.	Very good; of a very high quality; very effective practice; highly commendable; very successful; few areas for improvement; notable; of a very high standard. Excellent; outstanding; exceptionally high standard, with very significant strengths; exemplary
Good	Good applies where the strengths in the areas evaluated clearly outweigh the areas in need of improvement. The areas requiring improvement impact on the quality of pupils' learning. The school needs to build on its strengths and take action to address the areas identified as requiring improvement in order to achieve a <i>very good</i> standard.	Good; good quality; valuable; effective practice; competent; useful; commendable; good standard; some areas for improvement
Satisfactory	Satisfactory applies where the quality of provision is adequate. The strengths in what is being evaluated just outweigh the shortcomings. While the shortcomings do not have a significant negative impact they constrain the quality of the learning experiences and should be addressed in order to achieve a better standard.	Satisfactory; adequate; appropriate provision although some possibilities for improvement exist; acceptable level of quality; improvement needed in some areas
Fair	Fair applies where, although there are some strengths in the areas evaluated, deficiencies or shortcomings that outweigh those strengths also exist. The school will have to address certain deficiencies without delay in order to ensure that provision is satisfactory or better.	Fair; evident weaknesses that are impacting on pupils' learning; less than satisfactory; experiencing difficulty; must improve in specified areas; action required to improve
Weak	Weak applies where there are serious deficiencies in the areas evaluated. Immediate and coordinated whole-school action is required to address the areas of concern. In some cases, the intervention of other agencies may be required to support improvements.	Weak; unsatisfactory; insufficient; ineffective; poor; requiring significant change, development or improvement; experiencing significant difficulties;

Appendix

SCHOOL RESPONSE TO THE REPORT

Submitted by the Board of Management

Part A Observations on the content of the inspection report

The Board of Management of Watergrasshill N.S. would like to acknowledge receipt of the Curriculum Evaluation in SPHE.

We welcome the findings regarding the high quality of teaching and learning in our school.

We take great pride in the affirmation that our school has a positive supportive atmosphere, focused on pupil well-being and that the whole school pastoral care, is embedded in the school's culture and underpins all aspects of school life.

The Board notes, with great satisfaction, the significant strengths made for the provision of SPHE in Watergrasshill N.S. and in particular, the exemplary aspects of practice in relation to anti-bullying and friendship.

We have long recognised the high quality of positive and respectful relationships between staff and pupils within our school. To have this confirmed in the report is very satisfying.

This is a positive endorsement of our school motto "Mol an Óige is tiocfaidh sí"

Part B Follow-up actions planned or undertaken since the completion of the inspection activity to implement the findings and recommendations of the inspection.

As a school, we take on board the recommendations of this evaluation. We have begun a review of the recommendations made.